

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BOTSWANA PRESS HIGHLIGHTS UBLS GRADUATION AND TURMOIL

REF: MASERU 980

1. BOTSWANA PRESS HAS GIVEN PROMINENT NEWS COVERAGE IN RECENT DAY TO UBLS GRADUATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE TURMOIL. SEPTEMBER 19 EDITION OF GOVERNMENT-PRINTED BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS CARRIED ARTICLE ON SWAZI PM DLAMINI'S ADDRESS AT GRADUATION CEREMONY. DLAMINI EXPRESSED HIS OPINION THAT "IVORY TOWER" INTELLECTUALISM AND ESOTERIC COURSES ARE NOT BENEFICIAL TO THE BLS STATES. INSTEAD, HE URGED THAT THE UBLS CURRICULUM BE AIMED TOWARD COURSES WHICH WOULD BE DIRECTLY APPLICABLE TO THE THREE COUNTRIES' DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

2. A MAJOR POINT IN PM'S TALK WAS THE FACT THAT, GIVEN BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS, NONE OF THE THREE COUNTRIES CAN AFFORD TO FUND A SEPARATE UNIVERSITY. THUS, THE PM STATED, UBLS MUST REMAIN A REGIONAL INSTITUTION. NOTE: ONE POINT THAT WAS NOT REPORTED IN THE DAILY NEWS WAS PM'S CONCERN THAT AID DONOR COUNTRIES COULD VERY LIKELY BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RELUCTANT TO SUPPORT SEPARATE UNIVERSITIES.

3. SEPTEMBER 23 EDITION OF THE DAILY NEWS CARRIES ARTICLE ON UBLS "SUMMIT" ROW (REFTEL) WHICH STATES THAT "THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND LOOKS UNCERTAIN FOLLOWING ... THE DRAMATIC WALK-OUT BY THE TIME MINISTER OF LESOTHO CHIEF LEABUA JONATHAN AT A MEETING HELD IN SWAZILAND." ARTICLE GOES ON TO DESCRIBE CONTROVERSY OVER VICE CHANCELLOR ROGERS' CONTRACT AND STATES THAT "THE LESTOTHO GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO GIVE REASONS" WHY IT OPPOSES ROGERS' REAPPOINTMENT.

4. BOTH THIS ARTICLE AND A SEPTEMBER 18 RAND DAILY MAIL ARTICLE DESCRIBE ANOTHER PROBLEM - THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF UBLS - WHICH MAY HAVE INVOKED JONATHAN'S DISPLEASURE. ACCORDING TO BOTH NEWSPAPERS, JONATHAN INSISTED AT THE MEETING ON EMPHASIZING DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMA CAMPUS WHILE BOTSWANA VP MASIRE AND SWAZI MP WANT THEIR CAMPUSES TO RECEIVED EQUAL CONSIDERATION.

5. COMMENT: THE PROBLEMS IN PARAS. 2 AND 3 ABOVE WERE CLEARLY ON THE SWAZI PM'S MIND WHEN HE DELIVERED GRADUATION SPEECH. IN ADDITION TO THE POINTS NOTED ABOVE, HE STATED THAT THE THREE COUNTRIES MUST MAINTAIN REASONABLE PARITY AND THAT EACH COUNTRY HAS TO SUPPORT THE OTHER'S VIEWS. ALSO, FACT THAT CONTROVERSY BEING AIRED IN BOG-PRINTED NEWSPAPER MAY BE INTERPRETED AS PUBLIC STATEMENT OF BOTSWANA'S POSITION AND SIGNAL TO LESOTHO THAT GOB LOSING PATIENCE WITH LESOTHO'S INTRESIGENCE.

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